



Global Communications Flight answers the call

By Airman 1st Class Patrice Clarke
319th Air Refueling Wing Public Affairs

From buying groceries to supporting the Global War on Terrorism, communications are an integral part of the military mission.

On a typical day, an Airman comes to work, logs onto his computer and checks his electronic mail. He reads the daily administrative messages to find out what's happening on base. He replies to a couple of e-mails and gets back to work.

Throughout the course of the day, the Airman might make 20 or more phone calls and send and receive more than 100 e-mails.

The 319th Communications Squadron's Global Reach Communications Flight answers the call to provide these same capabilities Airmen in deployed locations.

Normally, a deployed unit would set up a base with buried communications lines, but some host nations don't allow the deployed units to bury lines. A wireless transmitter called a radio frequency module jumps this hurdle.

This system transmits telephone and Internet communications from module-to-module without burying lines.

"This system allows everyone to stay connected while

deployed," said Tech. Sgt. Erick Tyndall, satellite communications technician with the flight.

The system's setup, Sergeant Tynall said, is done by a deployed GRC team in a matter of hours. The system uses point-to-point communications to transmit data to the different areas of the deployed location via a series of antennas.

"One antenna will be in tent city and that antenna will transmit to base operations," Sergeant Tyndall said. "There is also a second antenna at base operations to transmit to the flightline, or any other area at the deployed location that cables can't be placed."

The system is ideal if forces are going to be in a location for a short amount of time, said Tech Sgt. Michael Nielsen, 319th CS.

"It's easy to setup and tear down," Sergeant Nielsen said.

The system has the capability to transmit 24 phone calls and unlimited internet service up to 512 kilo/bites per second, per pair of modules.

"You could easily put two of the modules side-by-side and double the amount of calls and Internet space," said Airman 1st Class Jesse Simpson, 319th CS.

The communication system can be used for an indefinite amount of time as long as it is maintained, Airman Simpson said.



Senior Airman George Robinson, 319th Communications Squadron, sets up communications equipment in the field. Much of the equipment is made especially for the outdoors. The laptop that is used with the system can literally be "kicked around" and still operate.



Photos by Staff Sgt. Erick Tyndall

Tech. Sgt. Erick Tyndall, 319th Communications Squadron, adjusts the mast of a receiving unit for a radio frequency module.

Language – a cultural gift

By 2nd Lt. Mary E. Miksell
319th Operations Support Squadron

The ability to speak another language can be very beneficial not only for one's career options but also for life. Parents who speak more than one language often pass on their bilingual capabilities to their children. Children are better equipped to learn another language than adults, yet some parents feel reluctant or just do not realize the potential of having bilingual children. My parents, for instance, are both fluent in English and Spanish, however I was not raised in a Spanish-speaking home.

Growing up with the last name Perez and the features of a born and bred Hispanic has led to the stereotype that I speak Spanish. I was raised in a small town 10 minutes from the U.S.-Mexican border in South Texas. Everywhere in the Rio Grande Valley, people can be heard speaking Spanish. At first it did not seem like a big deal to be unable to speak Spanish since all our schools taught in English, with a few classes reserved solely for Spanish-speaking children. Since my brothers, sisters and I did not go anywhere without my mother, the necessity to understand Spanish was nil as she was our translator.

It wasn't until I was in my teens that the effects of not being bilingual set in. At this stage in my life I was allowed to go out with friends and to out-of-town school events. Whether we went to football games, the movies or just to the mall, people would speak to me in Spanish. Most of my friends, like me, had bilingual parents, but their parents taught them Spanish at home. So again, I had translators around me, yet I could not help but feel a little left out and a little ashamed. With my background and environment there seemed no reason



Photo by Airman 1st Class Patrice Clarke

Sharing the chores

Brett Richmond ensures his dad, Tech. Sgt. Bryan Richmond, 319th Security Forces Squadron, doesn't miss any spots in the yard Sept. 4.

for me not to be able to speak Spanish, especially when everyone around me seemed to think I should. In high school, the language options were Spanish and French. A majority of the student body took Spanish looking for easy A's on their report cards. I took it because I was trying to become more immersed in my roots.

Even before taking the language classes I had picked up on some Spanish from the local areas, but I was still far from being confident in my cultural language after high school. I felt better knowing I would be leaving the Valley and not continue to get the frowns when I told people I did not speak Spanish, which had began to annoy me. Why should I have to speak Spanish just because I look Hispanic? Due to that sentiment I chose to study Russian in college rather than continuing Spanish.

Yet it did not matter where I moved. People still looked at me and assumed I spoke Spanish. I know

enough to get by if needed, but not enough to be bilingual. Many times in my life I had to pass up opportunities because I am not bilingual. Finding a job in high school seemed difficult since many of the businesses wanted bilingual employees to better handle customer service. In college the opportunity to escort and "house" student nationals usually went to those who were either taking the same language course or were already fluent in their language.

Even in the Air Force there are opportunities, like becoming an attaché or a Foreign Area Officer, where the knowledge of another language or culture would come in handy and, in some cases, be required.

The ability to grow by expanding language capabilities and seeing beyond one's own culture is very rewarding. Parents who have the ability to teach to their children another language or culture, give them a rare gift. Such a gift can be passed on for generations.



Housing dedication

(Left) Base, contractor and North Dakota Congressional representatives cut the ribbon during the grand opening of Lewis and Clark senior NCO housing Aug. 30. (Above) U.S. Senator for North Dakota Kent Conrad addresses the audience during the dedication ceremony.

Teamwork, spirit of service, sustaining excellence

912th ARS makes its vision business as usual

By Airman 1st Class Patrice Clarke
319th Air Refueling Wing Public Affairs

In 2001, Grand Forks Air Force Base set an Air Mobility Command record with the amount of fuel-offloads, receivers, sorties and flying hours. The following year the Warriors of the North nearly doubled the record.

Although the operations tempo doesn't seem to be slowing, the people of the 912th Air Refueling Squadron say they don't mind. To them words like "teamwork," "spirit of service" and "sustaining excellence" embody the squadron's philosophy of business as usual.

What exactly is business as usual for a busy flying squadron? Each person has his or her own idea and own story. Here are some of them.

Teamwork

Airman Gabriel Muniz-Cruz had been a part of the 912th ARS life support shop for four months before he volunteered for duty in the desert as a third country national escort at an undisclosed location in Southwest Asia.

"I expected a lot of chaos and bedlam," said Airman Muniz-Cruz. "But it was pretty calm where I was at."

Even though the area Airman Cruz was in was calmer than most, he said there were still moments that shook him a little.

"The most memorable experience there was when a mortar hit inside the perimeter of the base," said Airman Cruz. "It was about five in the morning when it hit."



Photos by Airman 1st Class Patrice Clarke
Staff Sgt. Shannon Jones, a boom operator with the 912th Air Refueling Squadron, works on his pre-flight checklist prior to a recent mission.

The sirens sounded and everyone was moving fast and purposeful, said Cruz.

Thankfully, no one was injured that day.

While deployed, Airman Cruz's wife was well taken care of by the squadron, he added.

"They made sure she had everything she needed while I was gone," said Airman Cruz. "They made frequent calls and visits to my wife and were very helpful."

Spirit of service

Shannon Reynolds, a flight scheduler in the 912th ARS, said goodbye to the Air Force but still finds herself on base, not only because she is married to a boom operator here, but also because she is an emergency civilian hire for the same squadron she was in before she separated.

Mrs. Reynolds worked in the flight records section of the 912th ARS before she separated from the Air Force.

After separating Mrs. Reynolds became a secretary in an office on the University of North Dakota campus.

"It wasn't very challenging," she said. "In the Air Force I was used to being challenged and was used to having a sense of purpose, and I just didn't get that with the secretary job."

Mrs. Reynolds got her call back to service in a store one day when she ran into an old friend from the squadron.

"He informed me of the emergency hire position that was available and told me I should apply," she said.

After she turned in her resume at civilian personnel, the squadron made the request to have her assigned to the vacant scheduling position.

"I like being a civilian and serving with my old squadron again," she said.

Sustaining excellence

While at home station flying routine training missions or deployed to the hot spots of the world, aircrews know how to maintain their level of success.

At home station, crew members could be flying with one person today and a different person tomorrow. Deployments are different. When deployed, a crew stays together the whole time.

Capt. Paul Roberts, pilot, 1st Lt. Pedro Feliciano, co-pilot, and Staff Sgt. Shannon Jones, boom operator, were recently deployed together.

While deployed they were considered a 'hard crew' because they never changed crew members.

"It's easier with a hard crew," said Sergeant Jones. "You learn each others' habits and adjust your own accordingly."

"When you come back from a deployment, the first time you fly again is challenging because you are so used to flying with (your deployed crew)," said Sergeant Jones, "but you overcome the challenge."

While at home, aircrews also have to adjust to the high operations tempo.

"We are extremely busy just like the rest of the Air Force is," said Lieutenant Feliciano. "Even though we have 30 days between deployments, two weeks are spent doing regular missions."

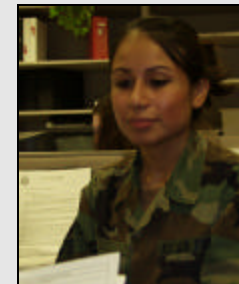
Those missions include ground training events, flying training missions and Operation Noble Eagle missions, according to Sergeant Jones.

When it comes to the people of the 912th ARS, whether it's supporting the families of deployed members, kindling the desire to serve or maintaining excellence at home or abroad, to them, it boils down to business as usual.

What is the best thing about your squadron?

"The people are very friendly and I just like working with them."

– Senior Airman Lucy Solis



"Working for a flying squadron is great. You get to meet different people and feel like you are actually doing something important."

– Shannon Reynolds

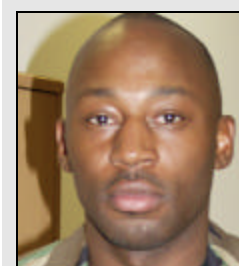
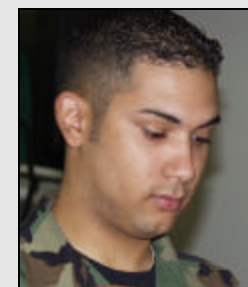


"The squadron is very family orientated. Being the new guy, It just seems as if everyone is friendly and willing to help me."

– Capt. Brian Backman

"The squadron is very united, everyone is always there for each other."

-- Airman Gabriel Muniz-Cruz



"The people are very hard workers and are always willing to help each other with any problem."

– Staff Sgt. Joe Bartee

"The people are awesome. When you work in other places you tend to hear stereotypes about pilots and aircrews, but when you work in a flying squadron you actually meet the people and realize the stereotypes don't hold true."

– Senior Airman Kristy Miranda

Patriots remember

Pilot recalls Sept. 11 medical flight mission

(Editor's note: This is the first in a three-part series of articles highlighting Warriors of the North who directly responded to the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001.)

By Staff Sgt. Scott T. Sturkol
319th Air Refueling Wing Public Affairs

Three years after the events of Sept. 11, 2001, when 19 hijackers boarded four commercial planes and crashed them into New York's World Trade Center, the Pentagon, and a field in Pennsylvania, killing about 3,000 people, Capt. Kenneth Langert is deployed fighting the Global War on Terrorism.

The GWOT is a direct result of those attacks – taking the fight to the enemy in an effort to prevent any future “9-11s.” For Captain Langert, 912th Air Refueling Squadron KC-135R Stratotanker pilot, this global effort has many personal memories attached to it.

“At the time of the attacks on Sept. 11, I was at home in crew rest for a training flight,” Captain Langert said. “I watched the events in awe, however, I was mostly concerned for my family and whether there might be more attacks that day.”

Three years ago, the captain was one of only a handful of people who were allowed to fly that day. At the time, Captain Langert was a C-21 pilot stationed at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio. A short time after the attacks, he learned his mission that day changed from a train-

ing flight to something more critical.

“I was called shortly after the attack by my schedulers and told that my mission had changed,” Captain Langert said. “A request came in for delivery of human skin to Andrews Air Force Base (Md.) for transport to a burn center in Washington.

“We departed in a C-21 at 8 p.m., arrived at Andrews at 9 p.m., handed over a cooler containing a supply of skin to medical staff awaiting our arrival and immediately returned to the home base,” the captain said. “It was a great effort by all the base personnel and medical staff. I remember the seriousness and intensity that everyone displayed for the mission we were about to do.”

The C-21 is a twin turboprop engine aircraft used for cargo and passenger airlift. In addition, the aircraft is also capable of transporting litters during medical evacuations.

Captain Langert added that his new role as a tanker pilot is just as important as what he did on Sept. 11.

“It is a good feeling to know that our actions are directly fueling the fight so to speak,” Captain Langert said. “It’s rewarding when the gas we give to the fighters results in direct support of the ground troops. It is very hard on our families, but this country was founded on the sacrifices of our warriors.”

As an Air Force warfighter who’s worked hard both at home and while deployed for Operation Enduring Freedom



Capt. Kenneth Langert

and Operation Iraqi Freedom, Captain Langert said it’s important for everyone to continue to keep the lessons of Sept. 11 in the back of their minds every day.

“What we learned on Sept 11 is that this country is very vulnerable to attacks from people that don’t like our way of life,” the captain said. “I think what we do as Airmen is vitally important to protect the freedoms of this great country.

“I believe our fighting overseas has prevented more attacks here at home, and that keeps my family safe,” the captain said. “With the continued terror threats against our country, I do worry about family back home and the stress on them. But like I said, we are safer today because of the actions taken by this country to take the fight to the enemy.”

Captain Langert is away from home once again, this time supporting Operation Enduring Freedom at a base in Southwest Asia. He said Sept. 11 is forever etched in his memories, but he is proud he can make a difference. On the third anniversary of Patriot Day, he said he will reflect on some very important things.

“I remember why I am in the Air Force, how blessed I am to be able to help my country fight this continuing war on terror,” Captain Langert said. “I help fight this war because those people who died on Sept. 11, 2001, deserve our commitment and continued effort to bring the terrorists to justice.”



Photos by Airman 1st Class Patrice Clarke

Spaghetti anyone?

Airman Against Drunk Driving hosted a spaghetti lunch Monday at the Prairie Rose Chapel. During lunch, AADD presented Mr. Dennis Potter, vice president of the Military Affairs Committee, with a letter of appreciation for

the MACs support of AADD. (Top left) Senior Airman Christy Banks, 319th Air Refueling Wing, Airman Demea Bonner, 319th ARW, and Airman Katie Martin, 319th Aeromedical Dental Squadron, sold tickets for the AADD spaghetti dinner. Col. Mark Ramsay, 319th ARW commander and Chief Master Sgt. Holwerda look on while Mr. Potter is presented with the letter of appreciation by Staff Sgt. Michael Glenn, president of AADD. (Above) Second Lt. Timothy Bassett, 319th Communications Squadron, and Dominic Westerfield, 319th Services Squadron, get some spaghetti to go.

Remember where you were

By Staff Sgt. Scott T. Sturkol
319th Air Refueling Wing Public Affairs

People I've met from the World War II era still talk about where they were when the Japanese struck Pearl Harbor on Dec. 7, 1941, pulling the United States into the war.

Our generation, however, has another date that lives in "infamy" – Sept. 11, 2001.

I've met people from New York who are still angry their city was attacked. I've met and talked with people who were in Washington, D.C. on that day and remember being scared to death they would be the next victims. In September 2002, I went to see the charred steel I-beams from the World Trade Center set up as a 9-11 memorial at the International Peace Gardens near Denseith, N.D.

The reminders of that day are everywhere, but I think the more important memories about Sept. 11 are what we as servicemembers and Americans have done in response to those attacks.

We've shed a lot of tears and remembered the families of the victims. We, as a nation, have made strikes on all fronts to protect our homeland and its people. We've become accustomed to a new mindset that our security is dependent on the vigilance of our people and their ability to adjust to change. Americans have reacted with strength.

Operation Enduring Freedom began on Oct. 7, 2001 – effectively starting the Global War on Terrorism in the backyard of the terrorists. It's an easy date for me to remember because Oct. 7 is also my wife's birthday. So while I celebrate my wife's birthday with her, I also get to celebrate freedom and how on that day we began what eventually became the liberation of Afghanistan from the Taliban.

I was in Afghanistan a little more than a year ago. I went to Bagram Air Base and saw how the Air Force, Army, Marines, Navy, Coalition forces, and Afghani nationals were taking steps toward a democracy in that country. As a matter of fact, Afghanistan will hold its first democratic national elections in October. That alone

is a positive result of Sept. 11.

Also last year I went to Iraq, where I served as a security escort for Arab media from England, including Iraqi journalist and novelist Khalid Kishtainy. At that time, Mr. Kishtainy had not set foot in his homeland since 1989, when his life was threatened by Saddam Hussein. During a stop in Basrah, he said, "Thanks to America, I can come home once again."

Mr. Kishtainy's words alone said to me that we are winning the fight in the Global War on Terror. He later told me in an interview that he, like many others, was shocked when the events of Sept. 11 unfolded.

I recently took a trip through Canada in early August. I remember stopping at a rest stop in Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario, where I struck up a conversation with a Canadian police officer from . Even though it was almost three years after the fact, he expressed how he and many of his countrymen were appalled by the attacks.

This police officer said my haircut gave me away as being a military man, so he asked me what it's like to be in the U.S. military. I told him it was an honor to serve alongside a lot of brave and steadfast people and I handed him an extra Air Force recruiting key chain I had with me.

When I crossed back over the bridge into Michigan from Canada, a U.S. Border Patrol agent took a look at my military ID and said, "Thanks for what you do." All I could say back was, "Thanks for what you do too."

After all, he had just as an important job in protecting our homeland.

The lessons of Sept. 11 are all around us and are always on our minds. For our military families, it's been just as much of a sacrifice. Since that fateful day, military families in all the services have sacrificed much and have adjusted to a wartime mindset.

More frequent and longer deployments are just some things they have endured. But, like the toughness of the warriors on the frontline, military families are winning the battles on the home front and doing their part.

As a nation, we can never forget that day. But if we always remember where we were, what we were doing, and who we are, it will always serve as our battle cry.

As the terrorists lose, we'll know that Sept. 11 will be remembered as a day that America, and the world, heard freedom's call once again.

We must prevail

By Lt. Col. Leslie Burns
912th Air Refueling Squadron commander

September 11 came to remind us once again.

As we observed this memorable day, I reflect on the lives, precious human gifts, and future promise lost with about 3,000 of our fellow Americans.

I recall the losses our armed forces have experienced in combat and the loss of lives through the desperate acts of brutality that characterize terrorism.

More recently, I'm saddened by the loss of one of our own Warriors in the 319th Operations Group – Capt. John Boria who died while on deployment to Qatar.

Yet in spite of this sadness, I'm so thankful for Capt. John Boria's life and his service. He and many other young men and women of our wing have repeatedly stood steadfast in harms way to continue the necessary work of our generation.

We've had our freedoms at home and abroad tainted with a sense of fear that we must be ever vigilant to

protect ourselves. I've recently witnessed the tragic events in Russia with a sense of renewed resolve that the course we've set as a nation must be sustained to rid the world of this menace.

We can't look over our shoulder in fear. We must understand our enemy's nature and confront it daily, indefinitely.

It's tough, and we have to keep going.

Today, as I reflect and remember, I say thank you, particularly to my own 912th Air Refueling Squadron patriots and families.

You have not wavered from the course in spite of the sacrifices.

Remember you are surrounded by United States Air Force Airmen throughout this wing, from all backgrounds, likewise committed with the same grit and resolve to carry on the task at hand.

Take comfort in that knowledge and strengthen yourselves in the ties that bind us amid the fight for peace and freedom.

We must prevail.



Courtesy photo

Lt. Col. Leslie Burns, 912th Air Refueling Squadron commander, works the controls of a KC-135R Stratotanker.

Warriors of the North observe Patriot Day

319th Air Refueling Wing members, local civic leaders and law enforcement came together Sept. 11, to honor the memory of the victims of the Sept. 11, 2001 terrorist attacks.



Airman Brian Clipper, Honor Guard, plays taps during the Sept. 11 ceremony.
Photo by Staff Sgt. Scott T. Sturkol



Senior Airman Eric Gann, Honor Guard, retires the flag after the ceremony. The ceremony also included a KC-135 fly-by and 21-gun salute.
Photo by Staff Sgt. Scott T. Sturkol

Patriots remember

Airman tells of response to Pentagon, Anthrax attacks

By Staff Sgt. Scott T. Sturkol
319th Air Refueling Wing Public Affairs

Editor's note: This is the second in a three-part series of articles highlighting Warriors of the North who directly responded to the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001.

At Andrews Air Force Base, Md., on the morning of Sept. 11, 2001, the sun was shining and to most it was a typical day at a base where Air Force One, Air Force Two, and other aircraft of the U.S. government's high officials operate.

By mid-morning, however, when terrorist hijackers began crashing planes into the World Trade Center in New York, the Pentagon in Washington not far from Andrews, and in Pennsylvania, the opstempo at the base hit a fever pitch, according to Senior Airman Andrea Taylor, 319th Aeromedical-Dental Squadron bioenvironmental engineering journeyman.

At that time, Airman Taylor worked with a bioenvironmental team in the 89th Aerospace Medical and Dental Squadron at Andrews. She said in her office they didn't have radio or television so what they heard about planes crashing into the World Trade Center was thought to be false information.

When the planes struck

"Until the Pentagon incident, we thought it was simply a rumor," Airman Taylor said. "When it was confirmed a plane crashed into the Pentagon, they evacuated our building, except for my office, and we were told we should expect not to leave anytime soon."

Airman Taylor said it was impossible to make any phone calls, whether it was by cell phone or land line, at that time.

"All circuits were busy," she said. "It was a very helpless feeling, especially not knowing if the base was also an additional target. With the president, vice president, and other dignitaries constantly flying in and out of that base, it was a realistic threat."

Airman Taylor said when she and her co-workers finally got access to a television — that was when the intensity and threat of the situation really sunk in for everyone.

"There was a lot of anxiety in the office because no one could contact their families to let them know that we were safe," Airman Taylor said.

Bio-environmental response

Airman Taylor said it was about 5 p.m. when her bioenvironmental team was

requested by the Environmental Protection Agency to help monitor the air quality in the Pentagon.

"Even though the Pentagon was hit, it was determined that personnel would be returning to work as usual the next day so we had to go in check the building for its air quality."

For a building that has miles of corridors and covers many acres of offices and floors, the senior airman said her team had their work cut out for them.

Scene of devastation

"I will never forget the first time I laid eyes on the crash site at the Pentagon," Airman Taylor said. "In a way, it's difficult to apply words to the magnitude of the shock value. I think the most complicated part was trying to comprehend that an actual aircraft had for the most part disappeared into the building, but left a huge gaping hole, and took hundreds of innocent unsuspecting lives."

Airman Taylor said the Pentagon is so huge that any pictures people may have seen do not do it justice.

"There are 17 miles of corridors throughout the building," Airman Taylor said. "Then there is the inside-out perspective we had while in the building when we got there on the evening of Sept. 11. There was quarter-inch of black soot from the floor to the ceiling in many of the corridors, and all electricity was out, which gave it an even more morbid, sullen feeling. A lot of times we found ourselves making our way around by simply a flashlight."

Airman Taylor said her team's initial task was to set up area air sampling pumps along the areas closest to the crash site inside the building. Those pumps were there to ensure minimal release of asbestos.

"When plastics such as carpet, upholstery and other office furniture burn, they often release combustion byproducts also known as hydrocarbons," Airman Taylor said. "These are harmful for human inhalation. We had four direct reading instruments and had to constantly monitor pre-determined locations for proper oxygen, carbon dioxide, lack of carbon monoxide and other hazardous atmospheric changes in air quality."

More work to be done

After working a 14-hour shift well into the next day, Airman Taylor said her team was relieved by another crew consisting of support from McGuire AFB, N.J., and Dover AFB, Del. After a short rest, her team



Photo by Staff Sgt. Scott T. Sturkol

Senior Airman Andrea Taylor, 319th Aeromedical-Dental Squadron bioenvironmental journeyman, looks over some chemical warfare response masks in the 319th Medical Group emergency response storeroom.

was called up to do more work.

"We were then tasked with providing direct support to an Army search and rescue team, who were looking for survivors and remains," Airman Taylor said. "This by far was the most sobering portion of my experience there. We applied individual air sampling pumps to approximately 10 rescue team members at a time, before they were to enter the crumbled, unstable, crash site."

Airman Taylor said that at the time it was obvious most of the jet fuel from the crashed plane had burned off, but portions of the site were actually still on fire.

"Those Army troops were in respirators and full, head-to-toe protective equipment," Airman Taylor said. "Our pumps were extra precautionary measures to ensure the health and safety and their minimal exposure to airborne hazards. Every time they would enter, I remember saying a silent prayer in hopes they were able to find another survivor."

"However, when they would return with personal items like purses, pictures, shoes and keys," she said, "it was a drastic reminder of how precious life really

is. It was very humbling in the most devastating sort of way."

Team responds to more attacks

Soon after Sept. 11, letters containing Anthrax spores were mailed to major American news organizations and to various senators and congressional representatives in the U.S. Capitol Building in Washington, D.C. Senior Airman Taylor's team also immediately responded to those attacks.

"The Andrews Bioenvironmental Engineering Office was asked to provide a sampling team to support a Marine Corps team already in place," Airman Taylor said. "We were able to create a six-man team that was properly immunized and willing to enter potentially biologically-threatened buildings."

After arriving in downtown Washington, Airman Taylor's team suited up in "Level B" personal protective equipment, which is one level short of a full suit.

Our objective was to enter the building and take numerous swipe samples (in every office work area), and also take vacuum samples for Anthrax spores," Airman Taylor said. "This becomes a tedious task rather quickly when you are in very hot, non-breathable attire, a respirator and have very little dexterity and movement capability."

Airman Taylor said that although the effort was very difficult it was also very adrenaline filled because the sweeps the team did had to be performed in a timely manner and virtually error free to avoid cross contaminating samples.

"Spores were actually found and confirmed as being positive for Anthrax in the building we entered, but on a floor that was sampled previous to our arrival," Airman Taylor said. "Nonetheless we still all felt as though we helped to ensure the safety of many of our nation's government leaders."

Based on the emotions she feels every time Sept. 11 rolls around, Airman Taylor said she will never forget that day.

"The first time I stood in front of the (Pentagon) crash site had the most impact," she said. "The events of Sept. 11 should never be forgotten."

"We should not forget to respect those whose innocent lives were taken, and whose families continue to mourn their ultimate loss," Airman Taylor said. "It should also be a reminder of how vulnerable we are as a nation, and that no country is insurmountable, no matter how powerful. I hope that it continues to unite us on the home front and increase our awareness of all the potential threats there are in the world."

Patriots remember

Missile officer recalls reaction at launch control center

Editor's note: This is the third in a series of articles highlighting recollections of Warriors of the North who directly responded to the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center in New York City, the Pentagon in Washington, D.C., and in the fields of Pennsylvania on Sept. 11, 2001.

By Staff Sgt. Scott T. Sturkol
319th Air Refueling Wing Public Affairs

In the world of intercontinental ballistic missiles and long-range radars, the “silent warriors” who work as missile officers always have to be ready.

Capt. Joseph “Joe” Scholes, director of training for the 10th Space Warning Squadron at Cavalier Air Force Station, N.D., located just two hours north of Grand Forks Air Force Base, said no one was ready for what was happening on Sept. 11, 2001. On that day he was serving as a missile launch officer at Malmstrom Air Force Base, Mont.

“I was on alert at the K-01 Launch Control Center,” Captain Scholes said. “I woke up that morning and my crew partner told me that a plane crashed into the World Trade Center. I thought he meant a little plane, but he told me that it was an airliner.”

At that moment, Captain Scholes said he thought it was an unusual incident and started watching the news while his crew commander prepared for bed.

“I saw the second plane come into view on television

and, when it crashed, I knew something bad was happening,” Captain Scholes said. “Since we were at the squadron command post, we then put our squadron into the highest state of readiness since the Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962. Our relief crew was already on the road when the attacks happened, but since no one really knew what was happening, our leadership didn’t let us go home that day.”

Captain Scholes said he and his crew mates ended up staying out at the launch control center for four days.

“During that first day, there was a very somber mood as we began to realize the extent of the attack on our country,” Captain Scholes said. “And in the following days, we worked hard to make sure we were ready for anything we could be asked to do.”

Captain Scholes said missile operators are always on alert – 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year – just in case the “terrible devastation of nuclear war” is needed to keep America safe. On Sept. 11, 2001, he said the vigilance displayed by all the people within Air Force Space Command assured that further attacks would not take place that day.

“I think the thought of us standing an untiring vigil makes our enemies think twice before using weapons of mass destruction because they know the consequences that such action will bring,” Captain Scholes said. “In terms of the Air Force mission, the protection we offer allows our war fighters, to operate with the assurance that they probably won’t have to

face weapons of mass destruction because of what we do.”

Captain Scholes and the personnel and assets provide a vital mission for the Air Force, he said. The 10th SWS operates the world’s only Perimeter Acquisition Radar Attack Characterization System.

Cavalier stands 24-hour guard over the skies of the northern tier of the United States. The radar, used primarily for ballistic missile warning, is so powerful, it can spot an object the size of a basketball at 2,000 miles.

Through it’s major command – Air Force Space Command – Cavalier Air Force Station helps support a mission “to defend the United States through the control and exploitation of space,” according to an Air Force fact sheet on AFSPC. It’s a big mission in AFSPC, Captain Scholes said, and that is why now, with the Global War on Terrorism, he said it’s important to remember what was learned Sept. 11, 2001.

“In the missile world there is a saying – ‘The man who doesn’t think there is anything worth fighting for is a miserable creature, and will not remain free unless he is kept so by the efforts of better men than himself,’” Captain Scholes said.

“We remember Sept. 11 to always keep in mind that we do have something worth fighting for. It is also important to remember we are at war. Terrorist organizations can remain inactive for long periods of time, just waiting for us to let our guard down. We can’t do that until we have won the Global War on Terrorism. That is why we should always remember.”

First shirt remembers 9-11 response at Nellis

By Airman 1st Class Melanie Sitarz
319th Air Refueling Wing
Public Affairs

On Sept. 11, 2001, Master Sgt. Doug Evans, 319th Operations Support Squadron first sergeant, was stationed at Nellis Air Force Base, Nev., working as an HH-60G Pave Hawk helicopter flight engineer with the 66th Rescue Squadron.

When he awoke that morning, he said he turned on his television as he routinely did, to see what was going on in the world.

“No sooner than I did that, Matt Lauer of the Today Show came on air and announced that a plane just crashed into the World Trade Center,” Sergeant Evans said. “As they began showing live footage, my wife and I sat on the bed watching the burning wreckage just wondering how this could be happening.”

Sergeant Evans said that is when the second plane entered the screen and exploded in to the second tower. He immediately knew he had to get to work.

Upon his arrival at his unit, he said there were a handful of people who were gathered at the operations desk watching

the news. Sergeant Evans said his flight commander immediately grabbed him and they both walked into the commander’s office. They were given orders to recall everyone, build the aircrews for alert, start pre-flighting all available birds, and come up with a flying schedule to sustain 24-hour hard alert for at least a week.

Sergeant Evans said he instructed the operations specialist to start the recall procedures, and then he and the flight commanders organized the alert crews and gave the names to the schedulers so they could start building a schedule. The flight engineers were then briefed, as well as the gunners and pararescue personnel.

“We didn’t have a mission yet,” Sergeant Evans said, “but when it came, we’d be ready.”

They’d spend the rest of the day generating helicopters and performing hover



**Master Sgt.
Doug Evans**

checks. “We went from helo to helo until there were none left,” Sergeant Evans said. “It was an awesome display of teamwork.”

The next night, Sergeant Evans said he went to work at 11:30 p.m. for his alert shift. That’s when he was given his first mission brief. His mission was to guard the Hoover Dam and the city of Las Vegas.

“More specifically,” Sergeant Evans said, “if

a truck or any suspicious vehicle capable of carrying explosives broke through the barrier and was headed to the dam, or was a runaway within the city, we were to stop it.”

To accomplish that mission, he said he and his comrades had GAU-2B mini-guns capable of firing 4,000 7.62mm rounds per minute.

To add to that fire power, the flight engineers, gunner, and two pararescue

personnel were also armed with their standard weapon, a modified M-16 with a 40 mm grenade launcher.

“I vividly remember walking out to the ramp that night to put my gear on the bird,” Sergeant Evans said. “It was very quiet and the temperature was cool for that time of year.”

Sergeant Evans said he double-checked himself as he had done on many deployments before, and as he looked up to the night sky and saw all the helicopters lined up and ready to fight at a moment’s notice, he realized this was a different kind of war.

“We train, train, and train some more to go to war, but I never thought it would be in our own backyard,” Sergeant Evans said.

Two months after the events of Sept. 11, Sergeant Evans deployed to support Operation Enduring Freedom. Even though he has returned and moved to another base, he said his former unit has remained on constant deployment ever since.

“I’ve lost 23 friends in the Global War on Terrorism,” Sergeant Evans said. “I won’t forget what we learned that day.”

Sept. 11: A day to remember

By Airman 1st Class Melanie Sitarz
319th Air Refueling Wing Public Affairs

There's a question that each generation often asks themselves when a major event occurs - "Where were you when that happened?"

From Neil Armstrong's first steps on the moon on July 20, 1969 to the murder of former Beatle John Lennon in 1980 - that question comes up. It is no different when talking about Sept. 11, 2001.

Each person of this generation has a similar story. The following are the accounts of a few people from this base who have an answer to the question - "Where were you when Sept. 11 happened?"

Starting school

Senior Airman Lucas Fannin, 319th Operations Support Squadron weather flight, was at Keesler Air Force Base, Miss., on the first day of his technical school training when the planes hit the World Trade Center in New York, the Pentagon in Washington, and a farm field in Pennsylvania.

He was attending a newcomers briefing held by the base commander when word got out about what was going on. After the commander heard the news, he asked the class if anyone had family in New York. Two airmen raised their hands and were escorted out of the room to call their families.

Soon after, the entire base was on lockdown.

"I found that out the hard way when I stepped outside to run an errand and got scolded for it," Airman Fannin explained.

It wasn't until a couple days later that security was somewhat lifted and Airman Fannin was allowed to leave the squadron. Airman Fannin said the first thought that went through his mind was the possibility of the Air Force going through a dramatic change at the very beginning of his career, and affecting him in the long run.

"At first, I thought the military was going to be like a regular 'nine-to-five' job but, at that moment, I realized that the Air Force was going to be something I'd have to do 24 hours a day, seven days a week."

The night of Sept. 11, Airman Fannin sat indoors watching news clips over and over again of the planes crashing into the twin towers. That's the time, he said, when it hit him that this was really happening. He also called his mother that night to make sure that she wasn't worried about him, but she was.

"She told me she was worried that I might have to go over to on a deployment right away," Airman Fannin said. After calming her nerves, Airman Fannin said they said their goodbyes, and he continued to watch the news coverage of the attacks.

Airman Fannin said that although the attacks did not affect him directly, the father of a friend of his died in one of the towers during the attack.

TDY to Germany

Bob Hauer, a prior Army enlistee who now works as the education and training officer for the 319th Mission

Support Squadron Education Center, remembers how the events of Sept. 11 affected people overseas.

That morning, Mr. Hauer was at his hotel in Stuttgart, Germany, where he was on a temporary duty assignment.

"I recall somebody telling me to go down to the hotel bar to watch the news because a plane had just crashed into the World Trade Center," he said.

As Mr. Hauer was walking to the bar, he remembers thinking to himself that it must have just been a small plane or helicopter because that had occurred before. But, to Mr. Hauer's "horror," the crash was much bigger. Just as

he turned to see the screen, he saw a plane hit the second tower.

Mr. Hauer said within 20 minutes of the attacks, his supervisor was on the phone with headquarters trying to figure out what to do next.

A European space conference being held at the same hotel that morning was told to evacuate immediately.

"The next thing I saw was a mass exodus of people leaving the hotel, trying to get to a safe place," Mr. Hauer said.

Mr. Hauer said he and the rest of the group he was with was told to remain at the hotel until further notice because they weren't in harms way. He said they were also told they would be doing more harm than good if they left.

For the rest of the week Mr. Hauer was in Germany, he said he stayed in his hotel and only left once.

"Security was tight and the atmosphere was tense," he said.

Later on, when the list came out of people who were killed in the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, Mr. Hauer said he recognized a few names - some friends he knows he will never see again.

"It's all something I'll never forget," he said.

House hunting in New Jersey

Before they were in the Air Force and here at Grand Forks Air Force Base, Diane and Senior Airman Kevin Hartley, 319th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron, were living in North Carolina.

Airman Hartley was working as a civilian airplane mechanic and on Sept. 10, 2001, was asked to start a new job for Continental Airlines in Newark, N.J.

"We had two small children and it didn't give us enough

"Security was tight and the atmosphere was tense."

time to find a place to live and get moved up there," Mrs. Hartley said. "We asked them if there was any way to move back the start date and they moved it to Sept. 17."

Mrs. Hartley said her parents flew to North Carolina to stay with the her children so she and her husband could go to New Jersey and begin looking for a new house.

"We drove to New Jersey on Sept. 9," she said. "On the morning of Sept. 11, we were getting ready for another day of house hunting. Kevin was watching the morning news for the weather and I was

about to get my shower.

"All of the sudden he is yelling for me to come look at the TV," she said. "I didn't even have my contacts in yet so I was squinting at the TV saying 'What? What happened?' My husband said that a plane crashed into some building in New York."

Mrs. Hartley said they had no idea they were watching history.

"We realized it was the twin towers, which we saw the day before from the bridge," she said. "We sat and watched the news as the second plane hit tower two. I immediately got on the phone to call my parents, because I knew they would be terrified. I told my dad to turn on the news."

Mrs. Hartley said at that time the news in North Carolina was showing coverage of the Pentagon.

"My dad said, 'Oh my God, the Pentagon has been hit by a plane.' I hadn't heard anything about the Pentagon because I was calling about the twin towers. In the five seconds it took me to say that, both our newscasts changed and I was seeing the Pentagon and he was seeing the towers."

Mrs. Hartley said they both knew at that moment something huge was going on and the nation was under attack.

"Kevin and I were having breakfast and heard of another plane going down in a Pennsylvania field and how they thought it was targeted for the White House or Camp David," Mrs. Hartley said.

"The waitresses were going table to table telling everyone about bridge shut downs and road closures. New Jersey was shutting down due to the mass of people that commute."

Following the attacks, Mrs. Hartley said all new hires for Continental were put on hold. Six months later, their family was still waiting and by March 19, 2002, Kevin decided to join the Air Force.

"My 23rd birthday was six months to the day of September 11th," Mrs. Hartley said. "He left for boot camp and I kept working and was thankful to have my parents watch our kids. I stopped working in July and we moved to Grand Forks in August 2002."

Like all have said, Sept. 11, 2001, was a day they will always remember where they were when it happened.

"I will never forget where we were," Mrs. Hartley said, "and how these events changed our life."



Korean War vet recalls days in captivity

By 1st Lt. Michael Meridith
319th Air Refueling Wing Public Affairs

Half a century later, memories of captivity still haunt retired Army 1st Sgt. Carl Gornowicz.

In 1951, the 22-year-old U.S. Army platoon sergeant, who now lives in nearby Argyle, was one of a handful of Soldiers who mounted a desperate defense of an isolated outpost in the Chorwon Valley of South Korea.

"There were hundreds of them," Gornowicz remembered of the North Korean soldiers who attacked one frigid October afternoon. "We repulsed them once, but they came back again and overran us."

The defenders, many of whom had been wounded in the fighting, were taken prisoner and marched north for several weeks toward the North Korean capital of Pyongyang. To this day, Gornowicz still wonders about the fate of some of his fellow Soldiers.

"At first, we carried our wounded. Along the way, they were taken from us

"Military folks are all the same...We all got a job to do and we do it the best that we can."

— Army 1st Sgt. Carl Gornowicz
Korean War POW

— supposedly to North Korean hospitals for treatment," he said. "I never saw any of those men again."

Eventually, he arrived at a rough collection of mud and straw "hooches" that would become his home for the next 22 months. Those months would be characterized by subtle psychological torture as the North Koreans waged a futile attempt to break him.

"They thought I was ornery and stubborn because I would never tell them anything during interrogations," he said. "Finally, they locked me in a hooch and heated it from the outside. Bedbugs came out of the floors and walls and started

crawling all over me." Gornowicz kicked the hooch's door down, finding himself face to face with a group of armed guards. "I just picked off the bedbugs and flung them at the guards," he said.

On another occasion, an interrogator tried to pull an Army ring from Gornowicz's finger. He reacted by pulling the ring off himself and flinging it into a nearby river.

"That really made him [the interrogator] mad," he said. "He had a group of guards fix their bayonets as if they were going to kill me." However, for reasons that remain a mystery to Gornowicz, the guards did not go any further.

After several failed interrogations and more harassment, Gornowicz was finally confronted with a North Korean who spoke what he described as "perfect English." According to Gornowicz, the interrogator asked, "How far will the U.S. go in this war?" Taking a measure of satisfaction in the resulting expression on his interrogator's face, he replied, "It depends how much you piss us off." That incident would mark one

of Gornowicz' last interrogations.

In August 1953, he was finally released. Summing up his days in captivity, the 22-year Army veteran (who also earned a Purple Heart for service in the Vietnam War), said only: "I stayed stubborn and gave them Hell."

Gornowicz' story was just one of thousands honored by Americans on National POW/MIA Recognition Day Tuesday. "We owe a priceless debt of gratitude to those heroes who returned to us after enduring so much hardship in captivity and to their families who endured the pain and sacrifice of living each day without knowing their fate," said Gen. Richard Myers, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff in a message sent throughout the military Tuesday.

Carl Gornowicz dismisses such praise. "Military folks are all the same," he said. "We all got a job to do and we do it the best that we can." For Gornowicz, that simple philosophy helped him survive captivity.

It is also what eases the memories decades later.

Squadron mates remember brother, friend

By Staff Sgt. Scott T. Sturkol
319th Air Refueling Wing Public Affairs

Known to many of his friends as "J.B.," Capt. John J. Boria, 911th Air Refueling Squadron, is remembered as a "great guy" and someone who could always be counted on in a time of need.

Captain Boria died Sept. 6 from injuries sustained in an all-terrain vehicle accident while deployed to Qatar supporting the Combined Air Operations Center.

Captain Boria arrived to Grand Forks Air Force Base in March 2000 and since then, formed strong bonds with many people he worked with.

Capt. Brian Oswalt, 319th Operations Support Squadron, was one of those people. He summed up his feelings of Captain Boria — "I'd say he was one cool cat."

"He was a great guy to work with, and a great guy to spend time with," Captain Oswalt said. "The great thing about J.B. is he was true to his word, and he told you like it was. If he told you something, you could count on it. There is a reason why J.B.'s death has been hard on so many people. It is because people enjoyed working and hanging out with him. I don't know anyone who didn't

think he was a great person."

Capt. Robert Slanger, 911th ARS and also a wing scheduler said J.B. was one of the most likeable people he's ever met.

"On deployments he always had a great attitude," Captain Slanger said. "He didn't see any value in constantly complaining. He is one of the first people I met at Grand Forks, and from day one I noticed he treated everyone with respect. I was his roommate, and can say he was always the type of person everyone wanted to be around."

Captain Slanger said that since Captain Boria's death, "Everyone who knew him has been reminded that a good attitude in life is important. That is how J.B. lived and that is part of the legacy he left his friends and coworkers."

Capt. Jeff Roper, 911th ARS pilot, said Captain Boria was a soft-spoken, easy-going friend and co-worker.



"He was an excellent pilot, trusted with heavy responsibilities and always up to the task," Captain Roper said. "John was an example to all."

"John flew as my instructor on a mission to certify me to do touch-and-go landings both by myself and while supervising copilots," Captain Roper said. "I ran across the training folder that he signed

on that mission recently, and I recalled an enjoyable flight with a friend and mentor pilot. J.B. was a shining example of humility and graceful professionalism even when dealt less than ideal circumstances and I'll always remember him in that way."

Staff Sgt. Matt York, 911th ARS boom operator, said he first met Captain Boria after an Operation Enduring Freedom deployment in November 2001. He said he knew Captain

Boria as a "great guy" and "no matter what was happening, he was always calm and collected." "He was a great pilot to fly with," Sergeant York said. "He set an example of being not only a good pilot, but also a good crewmember."

Capt. Justin Hubble, assistant commander for the 911th ARS B-flight, said Captain Boria displayed all the attributes that have forged Grand Forks' mantra as the "can-do tanker base."

"He flew as much as any aircrew in the deployed environment and worked very hard to accomplish the mission and never complained about anything," Captain Hubble said. "He was a true warrior, leading by example and he was humble, modest and always there when you needed him."

Captain Hubble quoted a familiar saying amongst squadron members — "A brother is not always a friend, but a friend is always a brother."

"Capt. John Boria was my friend and he was definitely my brother," Captain Hubble said. "There is nothing I wouldn't have done for him and I know that if I ever needed him, he would have been there. I am a better person for knowing him, and he will always hold a special place in my heart for him."

Security forces members honor fallen officer, colleague

By Staff Sgt. Scott T. Sturkol
319th Air Refueling Wing Public Affairs

Those who worked with Capt. Iwan T. Spolsky have only great things to say about him. Known to many as someone who would go out of his way to help others, and as someone possessing “boundless energy,” he has certainly been held in high regard.

Captain Spolsky, 319th Security Forces Squadron operations officer, died Sept. 6 in a car accident in Superior Township near Redford, Mich. – his hometown.

“Professionally, he was one of the hardest working and best officers I have had the privilege to work with,” said Tech. Sgt. Patrick Holtzmann, 319th Security Forces Squadron. “He would go out of his way to do things for his people and make you feel like you were part of the team. He never complained, put himself before his people and he never gloated about his life success. He always set the example.”

Sergeant Holtzmann and Captain Spolsky also had something in common – they’re both from the Detroit area.

“We were from the same hometown and we both have a common liking of the Detroit Red Wings,” Sergeant Holtzmann said. “We would get together to watch games and talk about home. He would always make me feel like we were back at home and talking about what is going on in our community. He helped heal any homesickness that I would feel. He was very down to earth and someone I could go to and talk about anything.”

Chief Master Sgt. Louis Lombardi, 319th SFS superintendent, said Captain Spolsky was an officer who



accomplishment depends on them. He understood this more than any other new security forces officer I’ve had contact with. He will be missed.”

The former 319th SFS superintendent, retired Chief Master Sgt. Michael Pratcher, said Captain Spolsky had a

wasn’t afraid to learn from the troops.

“This is what I’ll remember most about him,” Chief Lombardi said. “He kept you on your toes by asking why procedures were a certain way when he was learning the job. Also, I was impressed on how he presented himself to senior officers during meetings and duty tasks. He was very mature and made me proud to be a security forces senior NCO.”

Chief Lombardi said the opportunity to pass along experience to new officers is something security forces senior NCOs take very seriously.

“Providing a solid professional foundation is extremely important, considering they will be our future security forces commanders responsible for hundreds of enlisted troops one day,” Chief Lombardi said. “We have to take care of the troops because mission

rare attribute all senior noncommissioned officers desire in our officers – “He listened and respected the knowledge” of senior NCOs he was assigned to work with.

“He would frequently stop by my office and ask if I had a minute,” Chief Pratcher said. “I’d rise and say, Yes sir, what can I help you with? He’d say, Chief, you don’t have to stand up for me, I’m just a lieutenant.” I’d tell him my standing was a sign of respect for his rank.

“I soon learned to respect him as an individual as well,” Chief Pratcher said. “I’d close the door and we’d sit on the couch in my office and talk about whatever was on his mind. He’d depart thanking me for taking the time to listen and not being judgmental. Needless to say, this became a regular event with him and other members of the unit.”

Chief Pratcher added, “We have lost a fine officer and a gentleman in Captain Spolsky.”

Staff Sgt. Lyle Brandstrom, 319th SFS, said he served under the “excellent leadership” of Captain Spolsky while deployed supporting OIF.

“He was a fun, intelligent, and witty man,” Sergeant Brandstrom said. “Officers and NCOs aren’t allowed to be friends, and he was very professional. But, I considered him to be one of mine. He cared about his troops and was always quick to cheer us up on bad days.”

Sergeant Holtzmann said Captain Spolsky’s contributions will be a model for others to live by and his memory will never be forgotten.

“Losing Captain Spolsky is not only a great loss to the Air Force, but to mankind,” Sergeant Holtzmann said. “The qualities he possessed were qualities a lot of us have lost over time or just do not have. As I watched his funeral service in Detroit, I could see that his qualities are not something he learned at the Air Force Academy – they are something God gave him at birth, and we were all fortunate he lived by them.”

AFA football team honors former Falcon

John Spolsky was a 2000 graduate of the Academy

The Air Force Academy football team is honoring former Falcon John Spolsky by wearing a #38 decal on the back of its helmets for the remainder of the season. The team wore the decal for the first time Sept. 11, against Eastern Washington.

Spolsky, a 2000 graduate of the Academy, was killed Sept. 5 in a car accident near his hometown of Redford, Mich.

A two-year football letterwinner (#38) at nose guard, Spolsky set a school record his senior year in weight lifting for strength index, which measures overall strength. He broke the long-standing record of former Falcon and Dallas Cowboy star Chad Hennings.



Courtesy photo

319th LRS: Driving force behind wing's success

Compiled from staff reports

It may not be the largest squadron, or the most glamorous, but the 319th Logistics Readiness Squadron touches every part of the mission here.

"We're all things to all people," said Maj. Ted Lewis, 319th LRS commander. "Almost everything that comes onto or goes off this base is ordered, transported or fueled by the 319th LRS."

The squadron was created two years ago when the Air Force merged supply, transportation and major elements of logistics support into a base-level unit.

One primary mission of the squadron involves deploying wing Airmen and equipment. The squadron issues mobility gear and marshals cargo, baggage, equipment and personnel to the aircraft. The cargo deployment function processes and transports equipment from squadrons around base to the flightline during surge operations and while responding to real-world contingencies.

During these contingencies, the squadron relies on augmentees through the READY program to run the cargo



Senior Airman Ryan Pokorny, air passenger terminal, uses and X-ray machine to scan passenger baggage before they board a military aircraft. The screening is done for as a security precaution.

Photo by Staff Sgt. Scott T. Sturkol

deployment function and air terminal operation.

"The augmentees have an enormous role in the overall success of the wing

mobility process," said Capt. Maria Roberts, Fuels Flight commander.

"Without the augmentees, the wing's mission would suffer."

Deploying Warriors will soon benefit from a new renovation process that will centralize all deployment and redeployment functions into one location. The new facility will provide mobility bag storage, with 900 A- and C-bags, and additional space for 900 additional A-bags and 450 C-bags. The mobility center will include three passenger holding areas.

"The goal of the new facility design is to increase capability, and to improve and speed up processing for deploying personnel," said Captain Roberts.

To move people and equipment for the wing, the squadron operates, repairs and inspects 510 special purpose and general purpose vehicles. Special purpose vehicles include plows, loaders, sweepers, and forklifts.

"We're historically the best in the command in keeping the vehicles running," said Major Lewis about the unit's fleet-wide 96.2 percent vehicle in-

commission rate.

Along with the vehicles, the squadron controls more than 13,000 assets in multiple warehouses. The supply section maintains accountability for customer's bench stock and equipment accounts, provides training and analysis, and inspects the inventory.

"We make sure everything is safely received, stored, inventoried and issued by our warehouse personnel," said Major Lewis. "This ensures a healthy supply account for the wing."

The squadron also supports the refueling mission with . . . fuel – 1.9 million gallons on hand at any given time. The petroleum, oils and lubricants section distributes about 1.3 million gallons each month.

"Rain, sleet or snow, the we're out with the hard-working maintainers refueling wing and transient aircraft," said Chief Master Sgt. Cynthia Davis, 319th LRS chief enlisted manager.

Along with providing direct support to the mission, the squadron also touches every member when they arrive or depart the base.

The transportation management office helps coordinate pickup and, in some cases, manage delivery of household goods.

But the mission doesn't stop at home. Members of the 319th Logistics Readiness Squadron have deployed in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom to perform convoy operations. As of Sept. 17, vehicle operators from around the Air Force have protected 39,157 commercial vehicles in 2,972 convoys spanning 472,500 miles. The convoys have moved 87,343 short tons or equipment, 3.3 million gallons of fuel, and 393,255 gallons of water to thirsty troops in the region. They've done so while facing small arms fire, improvised explosive devices, rocket propelled grenades, and vehicle borne improvised explosive devices.

"We're fighters," said Major Lewis. "When we talk 'tip of the spear,'" 319th Logistics Readiness Squadron's Air Force-wide truly embody that declaration."



Photo by Airman 1st Class Patrice Clarke

Senior Airman Vanny Vang, vehicle maintenance flight, tightens a bolt on a HUMVEE. The squadron operates, repairs and inspects 510 special purpose and general purpose vehicles. Special purpose vehicles include plows, loaders, sweepers, and forklifts.

‘Helluva’ good time

Warriors celebrate Air Force’s 57th year



Photo by Staff Sgt. Darcie Ibiidapo



Photo by 2nd Lt. Amanda Stewart

(Above) Members of the base honor guard bring in the covers that were placed at the POW/MIA table during the Air Force Ball Sept. 18 in the Alerus Center. The table symbolizes the fact that members of our profession of arms are missing from our midst.

(Left) The Valley Chordsmen, a barbershop quartet style singing group from Grand Forks, entertained the guests at the Air Force Ball Sept. 18.



Photo by Staff Sgt. Darcie Ibiidapo



Photo by Staff Sgt. Darcie Ibiidapo

(Above) Retired Chief Master Sgt. David O'Connell, 319th Mission Support Squadron, and his wife, Gail, share a moment on the dance floor.

(Left) Senior Airman Christopher Jacobs, 319th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron, proposes to Becky Mortrud during the Air Force Ball. She said yes.

Lieutenant receives Bronze Star for convoy duty

By Airman 1st Class Patrice Clarke
319th Air Refueling Wing Public Affairs

First Lt. Gina Ortiz, 319th Logistic Readiness Squadron, a self-proclaimed 'prissy' girl, spent her 25th birthday completing her final convoy in Iraq Aug. 28. During her eight-month tenure in Iraq, Lieutenant Ortiz was shot at, saw explosions, and experienced things few Airmen get to experience firsthand. For her time in Iraq, Lieutenant Ortiz was awarded the Bronze Star.

The young officer's journey to the medal began at Grand Forks sitting at a desk pushing paperwork.

"I would run meetings and do a lot of reports," said Lieutenant Ortiz.

LRS officers rotate through the squadron, and she had just moved out of fuels into vehicle operations before she was told in late December she would be deploying in February.

"It was my first deployment, and I always wanted to go," said Lieutenant Ortiz.

Like most Airmen who deploy for the first time, Lieutenant Ortiz said she was excited but apprehensive about going to the desert.

"They told me I was going to work with the Army doing convoys hauling cargo, passengers, and sometimes third country nationalists," said Lieutenant Ortiz. "I went in with an open mind. This was going to be a learning experience that not everyone gets to do."

When she got to Iraq in February, it was a different story.

Lieutenant Ortiz was told that she would be handling the gun trucks that provide protection and security for the convoys.

"Gun trucks weren't even mentioned before I left," she said.

Before getting to their final destination, Lieutenant Ortiz and 230 Airmen in her company stopped for five days of big weapons training. They learned the Mark 19, a semi-automatic grenade launcher, the .50 caliber machine gun, and a semiautomatic weapon.

Her company had 10 days with the Army Soldiers who had been doing the convoys before they arrived.

"These guys were the experts," said Lieutenant Ortiz. "They had been there for a year and had no casualties. We realized it was the real thing and that we had to pay attention to what these guys were saying."

It became dangerously real during the first convoy Lieutenant Ortiz went on when she came under fire 15 minutes out of the gate.

"I was so surprised," she said, "A vehicle operator getting into a firefight. So many things were going through my mind. Even though I was still in shock, I still did what I had to do. You don't have to think to pull the trigger, when someone is shooting at you, you shoot back."

Lieutenant Ortiz did pull the trigger, even though the weapon she was pulling the trigger on weighed more than she did, and was longer than she was tall.

"Every time I went out on convoy, I had to remember that there were people out to stop what I was doing," she said. "I couldn't be complacent."

The highest ranking person going on the convoy is the convoy commander and Lieutenant Ortiz wore that hat many times during her deployment.

As convoy commander, she was in charge of Air Force, Army, civilian and third country nationalist personnel. It was

her responsibility to ensure the people and cargo got to where they needed to be without delay.

When she wasn't the convoy commander, she was the officer in charge of all the gun trucks in the convoy.

"I made sure the trucks were where they needed to be, that all the trucks had the right amount of weapons and ammo, and the personnel who were on each truck had the required amount of equipment before they left," she said.

While on the road, conditions for the members of the convoys were less than desirable.

"We slept in our truck," said Lieutenant Ortiz. "We had to, there was too much ammunition and too many weapons that someone always had to be up watching. When it was our time to sleep, we slept."

"If we knew it was going to be a long trip we would hit up the post exchange for all kinds of snacks for our coolers," she said.

The one thing Lieutenant Ortiz said she didn't adopt from the Army was their 'pack light' policy.

"We would take whatever fit in our trucks, portable DVD players, game systems, televisions, coolers, anything," she said.

"The Army members would make fun of us for bringing our 'toys' on convoys, but they would laugh while watching a movie with us," she joked.

Adjusting to working and living with the Army took a while to do.

"We had this sergeant major who would walk in yelling and screaming his orders to everyone and the Airmen would look around like, 'who is this?' We just had to get used to things."

"Our goal when we deployed was to

have all 230 people who left come back home to their families, and we succeeded," she said.

During the eight months she was deployed, Lieutenant Ortiz and her company traveled more than 500,000 miles throughout Iraq, escorting more than 3,000 vehicles, and moving more than 15,000 pallets with more than 30,000 short tons of cargo. She was involved in 40 live-fire engagements. Because of all this, Lieutenant Ortiz was awarded the Bronze Star.

That's not all she came back with she said. "We came back with the greatest memories of things we never thought we would be able to do."

Lieutenant Ortiz returned from her deployment Sept. 10.

A "prissy girl" to the end, 24 hours after she landed back home, she had her nails done. "Our goal when we deployed was to have all 230 people who left come back home to their families, and we succeeded," she said.

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A 'prissy girl' to the core, 24 hours after she landed she got her nails done.



Photo by Staff Sgt. Scott T. Sturkol

Lunch, learn

Carl Ben Eielson Elementary School held a lunch and learn Sept. 17 for all second-graders. The lunch and learn is designed to give parents a first-hand look at the curriculum being taught to their children.

Deployed Warrior

Staff Sgt. Jered Pieschke
HOME STATION:
Grand Forks AFB, N.D.

HOMETOWN:
Watertown, S.D.

JOB TITLE:
Aerospace Propulsion Journeyman

BEST MEMORY SINCE ARRIVING AT DEPLOYED LOCATION:
Caught a five-foot Black-Tip shark that we threw back.

BEST ON-THE-JOB SUCCESS:
Watching aircraft 7976 take off after four days of maintenance.



News media experience KC-135's mission

By Staff Sgt. Scott T. Sturkol
319th Air Refueling Wing Public Affairs

Two days before the Air Force's 57th birthday, 11 news media representatives from throughout North Dakota and Minnesota participated in a KC-135R Stratotanker air refueling mission, providing a first-hand look at how tankers provide "global reach" for the Air Force.

The four-and-a-half-hour flight Sept. 16 over the Central United States involved the refueling of three B-2 Spirit stealth bombers from Whiteman Air Force Base, Mo.

Allan Burke, reporter for the Emmons County Record in Linton, N.D., located about five hours southwest of Grand Forks Air Force Base, said he learned how significant the Air Force's tanker fleet is during his first military flight.

"The refueling is awesome," Mr. Burke said. "It requires precision flying and exacting boom operation. Previously, I was not familiar with the strategic importance of Grand Forks Air Force Base, and I now understand the role of the tankers around the world."

The flight also yielded a new under-

standing for Chris Melbye, news director for KTRF 1230 AM radio of Thief River Falls, Minn.

"I didn't realize what a huge asset the air refueling wing is to our military," Mr. Melbye said. "By sharing the audio and video I got from this flight, many people in Northwest Minnesota will also learn more about the great things being performed by the Air Force."

For Matthew Schill, the flight was a chance to learn more about the Air Force on his own. What he learned previously came from his father, Ken Schill, who served as the principal for the base's Twining Elementary and Middle School for more than a decade. Mr. Schill is now a reporter for the University of North Dakota student newspaper – the Dakota Student.

"My dad told me a little about what it would be like," Mr. Schill said. "Now after seeing it, it puts those stories my father told me about into reality and connects me with the many years he spent at the base."

Mr. Schill added it's amazing to watch two large planes connect at high speeds up in the sky.

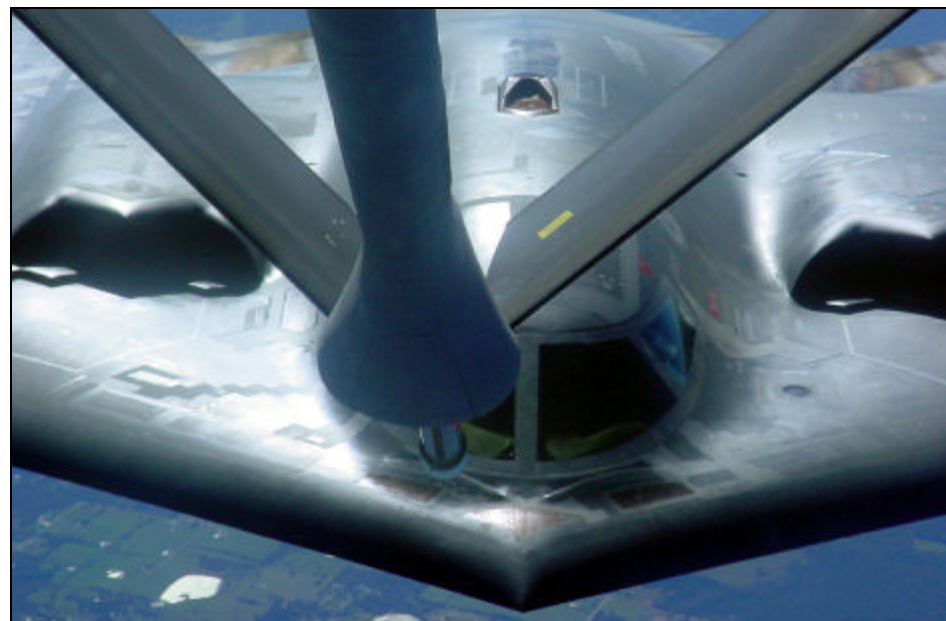


Photo by Staff Sgt. Scott T. Sturkol

Eleven media representatives from North Dakota and Minnesota participated in a KC-135R Stratotanker air refueling mission Sept. 16 over the Central United States. The four-and-a-half-hour flight gave them a first-hand look at how tankers provide "global reach" for the Air Force. They were able to watch a KC-135R refuel B-2 Spirit stealth bombers from Whiteman Air Force Base, Mo.

"I can't imagine doing it myself," he said. "And the fact that something like this happens on a routine basis, be it training or a (deployed) mission, is just amazing."

Overall, through radio, television and newspapers, the coverage of the flight reached an estimated 150,000 to 200,000 people in North Dakota and Minnesota.

Base earns \$25,000 from high ATWIND participation

Compiled from staff reports

Around The World In Ninety Days – Air Mobility Command and Air Force Space Command's summer promotion - ended Aug. 30, but the Warriors of the North put a \$25,000 exclamation point on the end. Grand Forks Air Force Base won the 2004 ATWIND Flight Plan competition.

The ATWIND Flight Plan competition was a formatted document showcasing how each installation advertised, enhanced and worked together. The game ATWIND, an interactive, Web-based program, was designed to help increase awareness and participation in Air Force programs, services and activities.

"Mission accomplished!" said Brig. Gen. Delwyn Eulberg, AMC Installations and Mission Support director, in an e-mail announcing the winners. "We had several excellent submissions indicating ATWIND continues to be an excellent marketing tool for Services and, more importantly, enjoyed by the AMC community."

Grand Forks Air Force Base took first place and will receive \$25,000. Travis Air Force Base, Calif., took second place and will receive \$15,000. MacDill Air Force Base, Fla., took third and will receive \$10,000. Scott Air Force Base, Ill., and Fairchild Air Force Base, Wash., were honorable mentions and will receive \$5,000 each.

Last year the base received more than \$7,000 for meeting its ATWIND goal. The base used the money to purchase two plasma screen televisions. The televisions were placed in the base exchange and commissary to continuously promote services events and this year's ATWIND events.

"We formed an ATWIND committee in early April consisting of facility managers and employees," said Julie McWalter, Services director of marketing. "This allowed us to focus our efforts and gave each person ownership in the program."

They took ATWIND and created local-level prizes.

"We got our local sponsors involved," said Ms. McWalter. "With their great support we were able to get more players and have more local winners."

The base is not sure how the money will be spent, but ideas are already coming to the surface.

"I would like to form a committee and have them decide how we can most effectively spend the money," said Ms. McWalter. "I would also like to take some of the money and use it to help promote our ATWIND events next year."

ATWIND was not only a success at Grand Forks, but according to command ATWIND officials, the program achieved its goal and more.

"ATWIND has been one of the most successful summer promotions ever conducted by Air Force Services," said Sam Parker, director of marketing for AMC Services. "In



Photo by Christine Davis

Tech Sgt. David Wilson, center, 319th Aircraft maintenance Squadron, won \$2,500 playing Blackout Bingo on the 319th Services Squadron Web site. Pictured from left to right, Dave Allan, Sundt, Sergeant Wilson, Col. Mark Ramsay, 319th Air Refueling Wing commander and Kermit Duncan, Sundt. Sundt Corporation donated the prize money.

the six years we have conducted ATWIND in AMC, we have had over 267,000 registered participants and have awarded over 34,000 prizes."

The AMC Services director of marketing said plans are already under way for next year's program, but Mr. Parker said next year people can expect something different.